4.0 ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED PROJECT

4.1 INTRODUCTION

CEQA requires that an EIR describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the project, or to the location of the project, that could feasibly avoid or lessen any significant environmental impacts while substantially attaining the basic objectives of the project. An EIR should also evaluate the comparative merits of the alternatives. This chapter sets forth potential alternatives to the proposed project and evaluates them, as required by CEQA.

Key provisions of the 2003 CEQA Guidelines (Section 15126.6) pertaining to the alternatives analysis are summarized below:

- The discussion of alternatives shall focus on alternatives to the project or its location that are capable of avoiding or substantially lessening any significant effects of the project, even if these alternatives would impede to some degree the attainment of the project objectives, or would be more costly.
- The "no project" alternative shall be evaluated along with its impact. The "no project" analysis shall discuss the existing conditions at the time the notice of preparation is published, as well as what would be reasonably expected to occur in the foreseeable future if the project were not approved, based on current plans and consistent with available infrastructure and community services.
- The range of alternatives required in an EIR is governed by a "rule of reason"; therefore, the EIR must evaluate only those alternatives necessary to permit a reasoned choice. The alternatives shall be limited to ones that would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project.
- For alternative locations, only locations that would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project need be considered for inclusion in the EIR.
- An EIR need not consider an alternative whose effects cannot be reasonably ascertained and whose implementation is remote and speculative.

As such, alternatives usually take the form of no project, reduced project size, different project design, or suitable alternative project sites. The range of feasible alternatives is selected and discussed in a manner to foster meaningful public participation and informed decision-making. The factors that may be taken into account when addressing the feasibility of alternatives (as described in CEQA Section 15126.6(f)(1)) are

- Environmental impacts
- Site suitability
- Economic viability
- Availability of infrastructure
- General plan consistency
- Regulatory limitations
- Jurisdictional boundaries

- Proponent's ability to reasonably acquire, control, or otherwise have access to the alternative site

4.2 RATIONALE FOR SELECTING POTENTIALLY FEASIBLE ALTERNATIVES

For purposes of this analysis, the project alternatives are evaluated to determine the extent to which they attain the basic project objectives, while lessening any significant effects of the proposed project. The project objectives are described in Chapter 2.0 (Project Description) of this EIR.

The alternatives below were selected for a variety of reasons; however, the goal for evaluating any, and all, of these alternatives is to identify ways to mitigate or avoid the significant environmental effects resulting from the proposed project. The following alternatives have been analyzed:

- No Project/No Development Alternative
- Alternative Configuration
- Reduced Project Alternative (A and B)
- Alternate Site
- Alternate Use
- Open Space Alternative

In summary, the purpose of this section is to discuss feasible alternatives and to evaluate the ability of each alternative to reduce or avoid significant adverse impacts of the proposed project. The reader is referred to the environmental analyses contained within the individual sections of the EIR (Section 3.1 through Section 3.14) and to the Executive Summary (Table ES-1, Summary of Significant Impacts) for a detailed discussion of environmental impacts by each issue area that would result from implementation of the proposed project.

The CEQA Guidelines require that an EIR state the reason for rejection of an alternative. As such, a preliminary rationale for rejecting an alternative is presented (where applicable) in this EIR. If the City ultimately rejects any or all alternatives, the rationale for the rejection will also be presented in the Findings of Fact, which will be reviewed before the City certifies this EIR and takes action on the project.

4.3 FACTORS CONSIDERED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED PROJECT

While the setting and location make the City of La Cañada Flintridge attractive for development, they also place significant constraints on future development. Development considerations include both physical and environmental factors, such as topography, seismic hazards, flood hazards, landslides, and significant ecological areas, in addition to the adequacy of infrastructure, such as roads and utilities. Constraints to development include the fact that hillside slope areas require special standards and management in order to assure appropriate development without substantial degradation of the valuable landforms within the City of La Cañada Flintridge. The City maintains a Hillside Development Ordinance that would regulate the development and alteration of

hillside areas and ridgelines, including projects such as the proposed hillside development on the property. Infrastructure in the vicinity, especially with respect to utilities and roadway network, should be viewed as a constraint to development. Proposed land uses that contribute to the degradation of either ground water or surface water that is used to replenish ground water supplies were also considered. Other development constraints include erosion control and fire protection. Furthermore, the site is located in an area of high fire hazard according to the City's General Plan.

4.4 NO PROJECT/NO DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVE

4.4.1 Description

The No Project/No Development alternative represents the *status quo*, or maintaining the project site in its current state. Currently, the site is heavily vegetated and situated at varying topographies. The project site is vacant with an intermittent stream in the western section, and an ephemeral drainage in the eastern section.

In general, no new environmental effects would directly result from the selection of this alternative. Maintenance of the project site in the present state would allow the site to continue in its natural state. Because the site would not be developed, any significant and adverse environmental impacts directly or cumulatively associated with the proposed project would be avoided.

4.4.2 Impacts

Aesthetics

Under the No Project/No Development alternative, the site topography and views of on-site primary ridgelines would not be altered or affected. Aesthetic impacts under this alternative would be reduced compared to the proposed project.

Air Quality

The proposed project would result in potentially significant emissions of air pollutants during both construction and operations. Air Quality impacts under this alternative would be reduced compared to the proposed project since no development would occur.

Biological Resources

On-site wildlife and plant populations would remain at existing levels under this alternative. There would be no impacts to riparian areas or wildlife. The project site would remain subject to wildfires to which the native plant communities have adapted. Biological impacts would be less than significant and lower than those expected under the proposed project, because there would be no disturbance to habitats as a result of proposed development.

Cultural Resources

As there would be no grading of the project area, cultural resources would not be affected under the no project alternative and impacts to cultural resources would be less under this alternative.

Geology and Soils

Under the No Project/No Development alternative, land alteration would not take place, and no persons or structures would be exposed to geological hazards. Additionally, exposure to on-site landslide hazards would not occur. Because no grading would occur, the No Project/No Development alternative would not conflict with grading standards of the City's Hillside Ordinance. Geologic impacts would not occur under this alternative and would, therefore, be less than under the proposed project.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

The No Project/No Development alternative would not expose persons to significant human health and safety hazards. The No Project/No Development alternative would not have any impacts associated with hazards, other than the existing on-site threat of wildfires. No impact associated with hazards would occur, which would be less than with project implementation.

Hydrology and Water Quality

Under this alternative, the existing hydrologic environment would remain the same. Existing natural flows from the project site to off-site areas would continue. Stormwater runoff from the site would be reduced under this alternative because runoff would be able to percolate and permeate through the natural surface of the site. In addition, proposed project water quality impacts would not occur, no persons would be exposed to localized flooding, nor would an increase in erosion and sedimentation occur. Because no impacts related to hydrology and drainage are anticipated under this alternative, impacts would be reduced as compared to the proposed project.

Land Use and Planning

With implementation of the No Project/No Development alternative, the existing land uses within the project site and vicinity would not be altered. Unlike the proposed project, the project site would continue to provide informal passive recreational uses only and would not introduce land uses that have the potential to result in significant environmental impacts and inconsistencies with zoning. In addition, this alternative would not create any potential inconsistencies with the City's land use policies, such as the Hillside Ordinance. Proposed project land use impacts would not occur and would be less under this alternative.

Noise

With the No Project/No Development alternative, there would be no new noise sources on site. In addition, noise from construction equipment and activities or increased traffic noise would not occur. Even though noise impacts

are mitigable to less-than-significant levels under the proposed project, this alternative noise impacts would not occur under this alternative and would, therefore, be less than under the proposed project.

Public Services

No development would result at the project site, so no additional demands on public services would result. Therefore impacts would not occur under this alternative and would, therefore, be less than under the proposed project.

Recreation

The No Project/No Development alternative would result in the site remaining as natural, undisturbed open space. Therefore, the area would remain accessible for hiking and other recreational opportunities such as bird watching. No impact on existing recreation opportunities would occur under the No Project/No Development alternative and impacts would, therefore, be less than under the proposed project.

Traffic and Circulation

This alternative would not generate construction- or operation-related traffic. As such, no traffic impacts would be associated with this alternative, and impacts would, therefore, be less than under the proposed project.

Population and Housing

The No Project/No Development alternative would result in the site remaining in its current undeveloped state. However, as the site is currently zoned for residential development, the land would not be used as zoned and the owners of the property would be constrained and unable to develop the land. Therefore, this alternative would induce a loss of potential housing, and the project would therefore not contribute to meeting the housing needs of the City. However, this impact is not considered a significant effect, and impacts would, therefore, be less than under the proposed project.

Utilities

No demand for utilities would be created with the No Project/No Development alternative, since there would be no population immigration into the project area requiring services. Impacts would, therefore, be less than under the proposed project.

4.4.3 Attainment of Project Objectives

Implementation of the No Project/No Development alternative would not result in the development of 17 residential lots for future development, as outlined as one of the project objectives. As such, this alternative would not meet the basic project objectives outlined in Chapter 2.0 (Project Description) and would not allow any

development within the proposed site that is currently zoned as residential, disallowing the landowner any and all development of the property.

4.5 ALTERNATIVE CONFIGURATION

4.5.1 Description

Under this alternative, the applicant would not build the project as proposed. Instead, the applicant would relocate some of the lots to other areas within the project site boundaries. This alternative would increase the density in the eastern sections of the site, while reducing densities in the northern section. Due to density limitations imposed by the Zoning Code entitlements and Hillside Ordinances, the lots would be developed under the provisions of Variance 02-10. Under this alternative, Lots 9 through 13 would be moved to areas in the eastern section of the proposed site (Figure 4-1, Alternate Configuration Site Plan). This would effectively develop most of the site area east of Bramley Way. Up to 17 homes could be built on the site over time, and depending on the prevailing socioeconomic climate, any number or combination of homes from one to 17 could be built over an unspecified period of time. Like the proposed project, a portion of the site would remain undeveloped, however, as a result of the change in configuration, the lot would increase to approximately 25.2 acres. It is impossible to state with certainty the level of development that would occur with this alternative; therefore, for this impact analysis, a worst-case scenario including concurrent build-out of 17 homes is assumed for all but air, noise, and traffic, which look at staged development over time

4.5.2 Impacts

Aesthetics

Impacts to existing views of the project site, as a result of grading and development of residential structures, would be similar to the proposed project, as up to 17 homes could still be built under this alternative. Visual alteration of the existing hillsides would still occur under this alternative. However, because development under this alternative would have greater density of houses within the eastern one-half of the site and possibly move proposed development off ridgeline views from Glendale and La Cañada Flintridge to the west, visual ridgeline impacts could be lessened. As environmental impacts would be assessed on a project-by-project basis, potentially following different criteria, a greater diversity of architectural styles and less attention paid to integration of the site with the natural environment could also occur. In conclusion, overall visual impacts under this alternative are similar to the proposed project, yet lessened in terms of effects on ridgeline views.

Air Quality

This alternative would result in similar potentially significant emissions of air pollutants during both operations and grading as with the proposed project. Assuming all 17 homes were developed at one time (the worst-case scenario for analysis), the construction impacts related to air pollutants would be approximately equal under this alternative. The number of construction vehicles emitting air pollutants on site at one time and the number of

PARCEL BOUNDRY (PROPERTY LINES)

430'
PROPOSED NEW LOT LINES AND DIMENSION

PROPOSED NEW LOTS and APPROXIMATE ELEVATION

NEW GRADING

PROPOSED NEW ROADS (PRIVATE and PUBLIC)

EXISTING CONTOURS

(16) PROPOSED NEW LOT

HAVERSTOCK RD.

INVERNESS DR.

MONARCH DR.

PRAMLEY WAY

SAINT KATHERINE DR.

PALMERSTONE DR.

OPEN SPACE

18

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17

0 240
SCALE IN FEET 1" = 240'

NORTH

SOURCE: Kudrave Architects

10734-00

EIP ASSOCIATES

FIGURE **4-1**

Alternate Configuration Site Plan

La Cañada Flintridge Tentative Tract Map 53647 and Variance 02-10 EIR

construction employee vehicle trips to the site would result in similar air quality impacts under this alternative as compared to the proposed project. The daily worst-case emissions of PM_{10} due to site grading would continue to cause less than significant emissions during construction phases. Project mitigation measures for controlling dust during construction would reduce impacts of the alternative to less-than-significant levels. Less-than-significant impacts related to consistency of the project with the Air Quality Element of the City of La Cañada Flintridge General Plan would continue to be less than significant under this alternative. Likewise, less-than-significant proposed project impacts to localized CO concentrations and other SCAQMD screening criteria would continue to be less than significant under this alternative.

Biological Resources

This alternative proposes the same total development on the site as the proposed project. Thus, impacts to biological resources would be the same as under the proposed project assuming 17 homes were constructed concurrently. Like the proposed project, this alternative would potentially impact sensitive plant species including native and/or specimen trees, loss of riparian habitat, introduction of undesirable invasive non-native species, habitat modification, and potential loss or take of sensitive species such as the coastal western whiptail. This alternative would continue to result in temporary short-term impacts from construction noise to sensitive or otherwise protected species. This alternative would also continue to impact biological resources in the area as a result of changes in water quality and the loss of riparian habitats. All proposed project mitigation measures related to biological impacts would also be required to reduce the impacts associated with this alternative to a less-than-significant level. However, some impacts such as the loss of riparian vegetation and stream channels would be greater under this alternative, although these impacts would remain mitigable. Therefore, impacts resulting from this alternative would be similar to the proposed project design, including the significant and unavoidable impacts as identified within the section.

Cultural Resources

Development under this alternative would occur to the same extent as the proposed project. Because ground disturbance would occur on site similar to the proposed project, cultural resources potentially located on-site would continue to be affected and impacts are the same as with the proposed project. All proposed project mitigation measures related to cultural resources would also be required to reduce the potential impacts associated with this alternative to a less-than-significant level.

Geology and Soils

This alternative would ultimately require the same amount of grading as the proposed project. Cut and fill would remain balanced on the site. The same types of topographic alteration on the project site would occur, resulting in modifications to on-site topography, as under the proposed project. The same number of persons would ultimately be exposed to seismic hazards as with the proposed project. The soils underlying the building pads proposed for this alternative would not be substantially different than the proposed project; however, the locations of the proposed pads would eliminate the need for septic tanks, and eliminate the significant impacts associated

with septic tanks on lots 9-13. Therefore, geological impacts associated with structural stability, such as those related to landslides and expansive soils, would be less than those of the proposed project, and would be mitigable to less than significant.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

The site is vacant and undeveloped and there is low risk of hazardous materials contamination. As with the proposed project, health and safety impacts are considered less than significant. However, this alternative would continue to create short-term wildfire impacts resulting from project construction and wildfire operation-related impacts. Like the proposed project, this alternative would be located in a very high fire hazard area, and the alternative lot configuration would not change the potential for the site to be affected by wildfire. However, the clustering of houses would allow for an increased defensibility from wildfires, as the structures would be scattered throughout the site and fire-fighting efforts could be concentrated within a smaller area. Fire hazard impacts would be considered the same under this alternative when compared to the proposed project impacts, and would be mitigable to less than significant.

Hydrology and Water Quality

Flooding and Nonpoint-Source Pollution

Overall, the same amount of impermeable surfaces would be created under this alternative when compared to the proposed project. However, as a result of the clustering of houses into the eastern section of the site, and the removal of the drainage channel, impacts to the sediment basin impacts (such as flooding and nonpoint-source pollution) would be greater under this alternative compared to the proposed project. The amount of impervious surfaces would be concentrated into a smaller area, and the ratio of pervious to impervious surfaced would decrease. This would lead to an increase in the volume of stormwater water coming off of that section of the project site, and the potential for on-site, and off-site flooding would increase accordingly. Impacts would therefore remain potentially significant. As with the proposed project, however, these impacts could be mitigated to less-than-significant levels with the incorporation of the mitigation measures identified for the proposed project.

Construction-Related Impacts

Construction-related impacts to water resources (such as construction dewatering and soil erosion) would be the same in area extent and volume, as well as the depth of grading, as the proposed project. Construction activities could occur over a longer period of time. Therefore, this alternative could result in increased construction-related impacts, due to the extended construction timeline that could occur if only one home were built at a time. However, as with the proposed project, implementation of all identified mitigation measures would reduce these potential impacts to a less-than-significant level.

Land Use and Planning

The proposed project would result in a loss of undeveloped areas that would impact to the existing pristine land use character of the project site and area. This alternative would result in the same amount of loss of open space. The conversion of open space to a reduced-density residential community would remain a less-than-significant impact, similar to the proposed project, because the site is currently zoned for single-family, residential development. This alternative proposes the preservation of existing trails as in the proposed project, which would provide an open space buffer between the existing residences to the west and the proposed development, and would reduce the grading of ridgelines. Assuming the Variance 02-10 to the Hillside Ordinance is granted, this alternative's consistency with local plans, policies, and applicable ordinances, would generally be similar to the proposed project, and would be equally as compatible with surrounding land uses. However, the density of development would be increased in certain areas for this alternative, and the higher density of houses would vary from the surrounding area and would produce significant inconsistencies with the general plan with respect to lot size, and density. Therefore, as a result of the higher density of houses within the eastern portion of the site and the impacts associated with grading, impacts with respect to land use would be slightly greater than the proposed project, and would continue to be Significant and Unavoidable.

Noise

The noise impacts caused by the alternative configuration would be similar to the proposed project during the construction period. The duration of construction activities would be similar to the proposed project, and, as a result, total construction noise impacts would be approximately equal. As with the proposed project, construction noise impacts under this alternative would be considered potentially significant but mitigable. Project mitigation measures for controlling construction noise would reduce impacts of the alternative to less-than-significant levels, similar to the proposed project. Operational noise would be the same at maximum build-out compared to the proposed project, since the same number of lots would be developed. Impacts would continue to be less than significant.

Public Services

Future demands on public services, including fire protection, police protection, and schools would be the same as under the proposed project. Buildout under this alternative would generate the same estimated population. The 5 houses that would be relocated onto the eastern section of the site would result in an additional 5 homes linking to the sewer system, instead of potentially requiring septic systems. The connection of these residences would not cause a significant increase in the wastewater generation of the project, and treatment capacity would still be sufficient. This alternative would eliminate the proposed septic tanks that would be required for the five lots under the current configuration, and would eliminate the impacts associated with the tanks. Similar to the proposed project, this alternative would result in less-than-significant impacts to fire and police services, but it would eliminate the impacts associated with the need for new infrastructure to provide fire protection to lots 10 to 13. Although similar to the proposed project, the changes in the configuration associated with this alternative would result in reduced impacts to public services, and impacts would be less than significant.

Recreation

This alternative would result in the construction of the same number of homes as the proposed project but would not omit the conservation of the open space parcel as proposed in the project. Therefore, impacts to passive recreational activities within the open space parcel would not be greater under this alternative when compared with those of the proposed project.

Traffic and Circulation

Under this alternative construction could occur all at once or one home or a few homes at a time. Overall construction time could be approximately the same as the current project and construction worker trips would be approximately equal to the proposed project. The same number of lots would ultimately be developed, which would result in a traffic generation pattern similar to the proposed project. Impacts under this alternative would be approximately equal to those of the proposed project, and would continue to be less than significant

Population and Housing

Under this alternative there would be no net loss of houses or population. The same number of lots would ultimately be developed. As a result, impacts to population and housing under this alternative would be the same as described for the proposed project

Utilities

Impacts under this alternative would be the same as described for the proposed project. This alternative would modify the density of the development within each area, but this would not substantially affect the magnitude of impacts on utilities. Construction impacts from utility infrastructure would result under this alternative, due to development of 17 lots on undeveloped land. Because the infrastructure required would be more concentrated within the clustered area, impacts associated with the installation of the infrastructure would be reduced under this alternative. Additionally, the locations of the proposed pads would eliminate the need for septic tanks, and eliminate the significant impacts associated with septic tanks on lots 9-13. Overall impacts would be reduced compared to the proposed project, and would be less than significant.

4.5.3 Attainment of Project Objectives

This alternative would meet some, but not all, of the basic project objectives as identified by the City of La Cañada Flintridge and the Applicant. It is possible that the Applicant would be unable to sell all or some of the lots due to market conditions and/or lack of required variance. As such, the objective of creating 17 single-family residential lots would not necessarily be met. In addition, greater impacts to land use would result due to clustering of houses within the eastern portion of the site, which would severely alter the existing landscape of the area, and would produce potentially significant inconsistencies with the general plan.

4.6 REDUCED PROJECT ALTERNATIVE

Option A

4.6.1 Description

Currently, the property is zoned R-1-40,000, which permits single-family residential development within the site with a minimum lot size of 40,000 square feet (sf). At one dwelling unit per 40,000 sf, up to 51 lots could be developed on the site if it were flat. However, since the Hillside Development chapter of the Municipal Code takes precedence over the permitted maximum density, a sliding slope factor is used to calculate the minimum lot size. With an average slope of 48 percent for the entire tract, the Hillside Development Ordinance requires a minimum lot size of 114,285 sf (2.62 acres). Applying the standards of the Hillside Development Ordinance, a maximum of 17 lots would be allowed on the site. The proposed project consists of a maximum of 18 lots, 17 of which would be graded and sold for future development. The proposed project would require grading in excess of 205,000 cubic yards and would include 18.36 acres of open space area with any existing trails. This reduced project alternative proposes a total of ten lots, with development on only nine of these lots (nine residential and one open space), versus the proposed development of 17 of 18 lots, resulting in lower density increased open areas, and a reduced project (see Figure 4-2, Reduced Project Alternative Site Plan—Option A). Additionally this configuration would eliminate lots located within a sediment collection area (Lots 2, 3, and 8), as well as those lots that could not be serviced by sewer connections (Lots 9 through 13) or areas with current water pressure deficiencies (Lots 10 through 13). It would also eliminate many of the proposed alterations to significant ridgelines and the associated viewsheds due to removal of development in these areas. Additionally, it would reduce impacts to the sediment basin further by incorporating a bridge or similar structure that would span sensitive areas within the sediment basin and not impede flows to the extent that the proposed project would. The total amount of dedicated open areas and associated preexisting trails would increase to 28.44 acres and would be maintained as under the proposed project.

4.6.2 Impacts

Aesthetics

Impacts to existing views of the project site as a result of grading and development of residential structures would be reduced under this alternative. Visual alteration of the existing hillsides would occur under this alternative, but on a greatly reduced scale, and in areas not so prevalent. Grading of the knoll identified as a Significant Land Form will be reduced by approximately 75%, and limited to only a small section of the eastern face of the knoll. Therefore, impacts caused by landform alteration would be reduced under this alternative to less than significant levels. The amount of grading resulting from this alternative would be reduced, and impacts to visual quality—particularly ridgeline views—would be reduced under this alternative, as compared to the proposed project. Impacts to Viewshed C would be eliminated, and impacts to long-range and middle-ground views from Viewshed A and B would be greatly reduced. Although a substantial change would still occur to the visual character of the area, mitigation measures identified for the proposed project would apply to this alternative, and these measures

would reduce impacts to less-than-significant levels. The reduced project alternative would result in fewer overall impacts when compared to the proposed project.

Air Quality

The air quality effects of Option A of the Reduced Project alternative would be less intense than under the proposed project. Fewer residences would be constructed, and vehicle trips would be reduced. Less-than-significant impacts related to consistency of the project with the Air Quality Element of the City of La Cañada Flintridge General Plan would continue to be less than significant under this alternative. Likewise, less-than-significant proposed project impacts to localized CO concentrations and other SCAQMD screening criteria would continue to be less than significant under this alternative.

The duration of construction activities would be shortened by the reduced project alternative, and as a result total construction emissions would be reduced. Although the total duration of construction activities would be shortened, daily grading activities would not be expected to be reduced during the worst-case day of construction. As such, the daily worst-case emissions of PM_{10} due to site grading would continue to cause significant and unavoidable emissions during construction phases. Project mitigation measures for controlling dust during construction would reduce impacts of the alternative to less-than-significant levels. Emissions caused during operation would be reduced by this alternative due to the reduced number of vehicle trips.

Biological Resources

This alternative proposes development on a reduced scale, compared to the proposed project. This reduced-scale development would avoid some of the areas containing sensitive habitat that would be affected under the proposed project, particularly the oak riparian woodland and associated ephemeral stream. This alternative would reduce impacts to the riparian habitat by avoiding development within the channel and associated surrounding vegetation, as well as increasing the amount of open space within the project location.

Like the proposed project, this alternative would potentially impact sensitive plant species including native and/or specimen trees, loss of some riparian habitat, introduction of undesirable invasive non-native species, habitat modification, and potential loss or take of sensitive animals like the coastal western whiptail. Though the associated impacts would be fewer than those of the proposed project, this alternative would continue to result in temporary short-term impacts from construction noise to sensitive or otherwise protected species. This alternative would also continue to impact biological resources in the area as a result of changes in water quality, but on a decreased scale.

All proposed project mitigation measures related to biological impacts would also be required to reduce the impacts associated with this alternative to a less-than-significant level. However, the reduced scale of this alternative would result in residual less-than-significant impacts that would be decreased compared to the proposed project.

PARCEL BOUNDARY
(PROPERTY LINES)

430'
PROPOSED NEW LOT LINES AND DIMENSION

PROPOSED NEW LOTS AND APPROXIMATE ELEVATION

NEW GRADING

PROPOSED NEW ROADS
(PRIVATE AND PUBLIC)

EXISTING CONTOURS

(16) PROPOSED NEW LOT

BRIDGE

HAVERSTOCK RD.

INVERNESS DR.

MONARCH DR.

OPEN SPACE

BRAMLEY WAY

SAINT KATHERINE DR.

PALMERSTONE DR.

LOT NO.	AREA (ACRES)
1	1.83 ACRES
4	1.52 ACRES
5	1.87 ACRES
6	1.22 ACRES
7	0.92 ACRES
14	2.13 ACRES
15	1.01 ACRES
16	2.19 ACRES
17	1.36 ACRES
18	29.69 ACRES (OPEN SPACE)
STREET	3.37 ACRES
TOTAL	47.11 ACRES

0 240
SCALE IN FEET 1" = 240'

NORTH

10734-00

SOURCE: Kudrave Architects

EIP ASSOCIATES

FIGURE **4-2**

Reduced Project Alternative Site Plan–Option A

La Cañada Flintridge Tentative Tract Map 53647 and Variance 02-10 EIR

Cultural Resources

Development under this alternative would be somewhat less extensive and more restricted in residential unit location than the proposed project. Any cultural resources located on-site would continue to be affected, but on a smaller scale. This alternative would reduce the potential for impacts to any yet unknown cultural resources to some degree due to the less intense grading, avoidance of the sediment basin, and less residential development. Overall, impacts are considered slightly lower than the proposed project. However, all proposed project mitigation measures related to cultural resources would also be required to reduce the potential impacts associated with this alternative to a less-than-significant level.

Geology and Soils

Under Option A of the Reduced Project alternative, a smaller portion of the project site would be developed and fewer dwelling units would be constructed. Accordingly, this alternative would involve less overall grading. The cut and fill would remain balanced on the site. The reduced volume of grading would result in less topographic alteration of the project site than under the proposed project, reducing impacts to hillside slopes. Fewer topographic landforms would be altered and road-grading impacts to hillsides would be reduced. However, as compared to the proposed project, the reduced project alternatives would result in much fewer impacts resulting from grading and landform alteration. The reduced project alternatives would also proportionately reduce the number of people exposed to primary seismic hazards (such as ground shaking and/or ground rupture) or secondary seismic hazards (such as liquefaction, seismic settlement, and/or ground lurching).

The soils underlying the building pads proposed for this alternative would not be substantially different than the proposed project; however, the locations of the proposed pads would eliminate the need for septic tanks, and eliminate the significant impacts associated with septic tanks on lots 9-13. Thus, overall, geological impacts associated with this reduced project alternative would be less than the proposed project and mitigable to less-than-significant levels.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

The site is vacant and undeveloped and there is low risk of hazardous materials contamination. As with the proposed project, health and safety impacts are considered less than significant. However, this alternative would continue to create short-term wildfire impacts resulting from project construction and wildfire operation-related impacts. While this alternative would result in less intense development, the resulting risk of wildfire resulting from construction and occupation of the residential units would be similar to the proposed project, but proportionately reduced. Like the proposed project, this alternative would be located in a very high fire hazard area. As there would be fewer houses under this alternative, fire related impacts would be reduced when compared to those of the proposed project. However, impacts would remain mitigable to less-than-significant levels.

Hydrology and Water Quality

Flooding and Nonpoint-Source Pollution

Option A of the Reduced Project alternative assumes development of a smaller area of the project site. Because the quantity of surface flows (or urban runoff) is directly proportional to the amount of impermeable surfaces, whereby greater quantities of surface flows are generated by greater amounts of impermeable surfaces, the amount of surface flows and associated impacts (such as flooding and nonpoint-source pollution) would decrease under the reduced alternative in comparison to the proposed project. Surface flows would not be altered to the same extent as with the proposed project. As fewer homes would be constructed, a decreased alteration of existing runoff flow patterns would occur under this alternative. Therefore, the reduced project alternative would lessen impacts associated with surface water flows (such as flood hazards, volume and velocity of surface flows, and quality of urban water runoff) in comparison to the proposed project. While impacts associated with flood hazards and surface water runoff and pollution would be decreased under this alternative when compared to the proposed project, impacts remain potentially significant. As with the proposed project, however, these impacts could be mitigated to less-than-significant levels with the incorporation of the mitigation measures identified for the proposed project.

Construction-Related Impacts

Construction-related impacts to water resources (such as construction dewatering and soil erosion) would be proportional to amount (both in area extent and volume) and depth of grading, as well as the length of construction activities. Therefore, the reduced project alternative would result in fewer construction-related impacts due to the reduced area of grading and the reduced construction period, and, as with the proposed project, implementation of all identified mitigation measures would reduce these potential impacts to a less-than-significant level.

Land Use and Planning

The proposed development would result in the loss or significant modifications of approximately 34.28 acres of undeveloped natural habitat, remove, as designated by the City's General Plan, a significant environmental resource (ephemeral stream), grade a Significant Land Form, and have significant impacts on viewsheds. These actions would produce multiple inconsistencies with the policies found within the City's General Plan and Hillside Ordinance. Option A of this alternative vastly reduce the amount of habitat modified or lost due to the decreased number of dwelling units constructed within the project site, and the corresponding reduction in required streets and fuel modification areas. It would also vastly reduce the grading impact on the Significant Land Form, eliminate most impacts to the significant environmental resource, and reduce impacts associate with viewsheds. This alternative proposes the same preexisting trails as the proposed project, but would result in an increased area of remaining open areas. This alternative would remain consistent with local plans, policies, and applicable ordinances, and would be compatible with surrounding land uses. Therefore, impacts with respect to land use would be less than to the proposed project, and overall impacts would be reduced to less than significant.

Noise

The noise impacts caused by Option A of the Reduced Project alternative would be similar to the proposed project during the construction period. The duration of construction activities would be shortened by the reduced project alternative, and as a result total construction noise impacts would be reduced. Although the total duration of construction activities would be shortened, for residences closest to the construction activities and along roadways that access the project site the noise impacts could be readily perceptible when compared to the existing noise environment. As with the project, construction noise impacts under this alternative would be considered potentially significant but mitigable. Project mitigation measures for controlling construction noise would reduce impacts of the alternative to less-than-significant levels, similar to the proposed project. Operational noise would be reduced compared to the proposed project, due to development of fewer residential units and noise associated with these units. Operational noise impacts would be less than significant.

Public Services

Option A of the Reduced Project alternative would result in nine (9) instead of 17 new residential dwelling pads; 47 percent fewer units than the proposed project. Buildout under this alternative would generate an estimated population of 30 persons, which is fewer than expected under the proposed project. This difference is not substantial in terms of police or fire protection, although demand for service would be slightly lower. Similar to the proposed project, this alternative would result in less-than-significant impacts to fire and police services, but it would eliminate the impacts associated with the need for new infrastructure to provide fire protection to lots 10 to 13. This alternative would generate fewer students than under the proposed project. However, the potential for additional students to significantly impact schools could still occur, and mitigation measures identified for the proposed project would reduce this impact to less than significant. Future demands on public services, including fire protection, police protection, and schools would be slightly less than under the proposed project.

Recreation

Option A of this alternative would result in the construction of 47 percent fewer homes than the proposed project and would still include any preexisting trails through the blue-line stream area. This alternative would increase the amount of remaining open space available for recreation and would, therefore, have fewer impacts on recreation than the proposed project. Impacts would be less than significant.

Traffic and Circulation

Under Option A of this alternative, phased construction would occur as with the proposed project, but overall construction time would be reduced, since construction of nine residential lots (and any future homes) would require less time to complete. The same number of workers and construction equipment would be required on site at any one time during grading and/or construction, but over a shorter construction period. This would result in fewer construction worker trips overall, but the same number of trips during the actual construction period as with the proposed project. Operational impacts to traffic and circulation would be reduced as compared to the

proposed project, as a fewer number of homes would be constructed. As such, traffic and circulation impacts would be less than under the proposed project, and impacts would be less than significant.

Population and Housing

Option A of the Reduced Project alternative would result in nine (9) instead of 17 new residential dwelling pads; 47 percent fewer units than the proposed project. While this alternative would result in less direct population growth as a result of fewer dwelling units, both the proposed project and this alternative are not in excess of regional growth projections and would not result in a significant impact. Therefore, the population impact of this alternative is approximately equal to those of the proposed project, and impacts would be less than significant.

Utilities

The Reduced Project alternative A would result in nine (9) new residential lots and one open space lot, 47 percent fewer units than the proposed project. Consequently, future demands on utilities would be correspondingly less. Similarly, the need for new infrastructure would be reduced, and the potential impacts associated with installation of the infrastructure would be less under this alternative. Additionally, the locations of the proposed pads would eliminate the need for septic tanks, and eliminate the significant impacts associated with septic tanks on lots 9-13. Hence, impacts to utilities under this alternative would be less than those of the proposed project, and would be less than significant.

Option B

4.6.3 Description

Under Option B of the Reduced Project alternative only nine (9) of ten (10) lots versus the proposed project's development of 17 of 18 lots would be developed (nine residential lots and one open space lot), resulting in lower density and a reduced project (see Figure 4-3, Reduced Project Alternative Site Plan—Option B). This configuration would eliminate lots located within a sediment collection/riparian area (Lots 2, 3, and 8), as well as those lots that could not serviced by sewer connections or septic systems (Lots 9 through 13) or areas with current water pressure deficiencies (Lots 10 through 13). It would also eliminate many of the proposed alterations to ridgelines and the associated viewsheds. This option would reduce impacts to the sediment basin further by eliminating the road crossing that links Monarch Drive with Lots 4 through 7 by extending Bramley Way to link proposed lots 4 through 7 with the current circulation system. As a result of this alternative sensitive areas within the sediment basin would be preserved, and stormwater flows and the accompanying sediment deposition areas would not be altered by the proposed roadway. The dedicated open space areas and associated preexisting trails would be maintained as under the proposed project, and similar in size to Option A.

4.6.4 Impacts

Only the impacts associated with Option B of the Reduced Project alternative that would differ from those identified in Option A are discussed below, as all others would be similar, if not identical.

PARCEL BOUNDARY
(PROPERTY LINES)

430'
PROPOSED NEW LOT LINES AND DIMENSION

PROPOSED NEW LOTS AND APPROXIMATE ELEVATION

NEW GRADING

PROPOSED NEW ROADS
(PRIVATE AND PUBLIC)

EXISTING CONTOURS

(16) PROPOSED NEW LOT

LOT NO.	AREA (ACRES)
1	1.83 ACRES
4	1.52 ACRES
5	1.87 ACRES
6	1.22 ACRES
7	0.92 ACRES
14	2.13 ACRES
15	1.01 ACRES
16	2.19 ACRES
17	1.36 ACRES
18	29.27 ACRES (OPEN SPACE)
STREET	3.79 ACRES
TOTAL	47.11 ACRES

HAVERSTOCK RD.
INVERNESS DR.
MONARCH DR.
OPEN SPACE
SAINT KATHERINE DR.
BRAMLEY WAY
PALMERSTONE DR.

0 240
SCALE IN FEET 1" = 240'

NORTH

10734-00

SOURCE: Kudrave Architects

EIP ASSOCIATES

FIGURE **4-3**

Reduced Project Alternative Site Plan–Option B

La Cañada Flintridge Tentative Tract Map 53647 and Variance 02-10 EIR

Biological Resources

The loss of riparian habitat and the waterway would be eliminated by Option B. Although the associated impacts would be fewer than those of the proposed project, this alternative would continue to result in temporary short-term impacts from construction noise to sensitive or otherwise protected species. This alternative would also continue to impact biological resources in the area as a result of changes in water quality, but on a decreased scale.

Fewer proposed project mitigation measures related to biological impacts would be required to reduce the impacts associated with this alternative to a less-than-significant level. Therefore, this alternative would result in residual less-than-significant impacts that would be greatly decreased compared to the proposed project.

Geology and Soils

Under the reduced project alternative Option B, a smaller portion of the project site would be developed and fewer dwelling units would be constructed. Although this option would involve grading an additional portion of the hillside above Bramley Way, this alternative would involve less overall grading. The cut and fill would remain balanced on the site. The reduced volume of grading would result in less topographic alteration of the project site than under the proposed project, reducing impacts to hillside slopes. As compared to the proposed project, this alternative would result in much fewer impacts resulting from grading and landform alteration, and would also proportionately reduce the number of people exposed to primary seismic hazards (such as ground shaking and/or ground rupture) or secondary seismic hazards (such as liquefaction, seismic settlement, and/or ground lurching). The locations of the proposed pads would eliminate the need for septic tanks, and eliminate the significant impacts associated with septic tanks on lots 9-13. All other geological impacts, such as those related to landslides and expansive soils would be similar to the proposed project. Mitigation measures identified for the proposed project would apply to this alternative, and these measures would reduce impacts to less-than-significant levels. The reduced project alternative would result in fewer overall impacts when compared to the proposed project.

Hydrology and Water Quality

Flooding and Nonpoint-Source Pollution

The Option B of the Reduced Project alternative assumes development of a smaller area of the project site, and completely eliminates alterations within the sediment basin. Surface flows within the basin would not be altered to the same extent as with the proposed project. Although stormwater flows may increase somewhat in the area of the Bramley extension, overall impacts associated with hazards due to on- and off-site flooding, and debris deposition would be reduced to less-than-significant levels. All other aspects of this alternative would be similar if not identical to Option A.

Construction-Related Impacts

Construction-related impacts to water resources (such as construction dewatering and soil erosion) would be proportional to amount (both in area extent and volume) and depth of grading, as well as the length of

construction activities. This option proposes the elimination of all structures within the sediment basin, including any structures used for spans across the basin. The construction related impacts to this area would be eliminated. Although Option B does include an extension of Bramley Way, overall it would result in fewer construction-related impacts due to the reduced area of grading , the reduced construction period, and, as with the proposed project, implementation of all identified mitigation measures would reduce these potential impacts to a less-than-significant level.

Recreation

This alternative would result in the construction of 47 percent fewer homes than the proposed project and would still include the any preexisting trails through the blue-line stream area. Option B of this alternative would also eliminate impacts to the sediment basin and associated riparian vegetation. This area would still be useful for passive recreation. This alternative would increase the amount of remaining open space available for recreation and would, therefore, have fewer impacts on recreation than the proposed project.

Traffic and Circulation

Option B of this alternative would eliminate two new roadways, but extend a section of Bramley Way that would be approximately equal to one-half the areas removed. Therefore the same number of workers and construction equipment would be required on site at any one time during grading and/or construction, but over a shorter construction period. This would result in fewer construction worker trips overall, but the same number of trips during the actual construction period as with the proposed project. Impacts to traffic on Bramley Way would be increased, as this would now be the ingress and egress point for Lots 4 through 7. All other operational impacts to traffic and circulation would be reduced as compared to the proposed project, as a fewer number of homes would be constructed. As such, traffic and circulation impacts would be less than under the proposed project, and these impacts would be less than significant.

4.6.5 Attainment of Project Objectives

This alternative would not meet the project objectives as identified by the City of La Cañada Flintridge and the Applicant (the development of 18 lots). However, CEQA guideline 15126.6 (b) states that:

> The discussion of alternatives shall focus on alternatives to the project or its location which are capable of avoiding or substantially lessening any significant effects of the project, even if these alternatives would impede to some degree the attainment of the project objectives, or would be more costly.

Therefore, although the project goals would only be partially met (10 of 18 lots) many of the significant impacts would be either lessened or removed entirely by the reduced alternative.

4.7 ALTERNATIVES FOUND TO BE INFEASIBLE

In an EIR, alternatives are evaluated in a screening process for two overall purposes: (1) to eliminate alternatives that do not conform to CEQA requirements and (2) to distinguish alternatives to the proposed project from other

EIR elements (such as suggested mitigation measures). The following alternatives were eliminated from detailed evaluation based on reasons described below.

No Project/Reasonably Foreseeable Alternative

The No Project/Reasonably Foreseeable alternative consists of the predictable or most likely development that would occur on the project site if the proposed project did not proceed. The City of La Cañada Flintridge General Plan designation for the project site is Estate Residential (maximum one dwelling unit per acre), and the site is zoned as R-1-40,000 (Single-Family Residential within the Hillside Area). Since the project site is one of the last open areas within the City that is capable of allowing the development of a project this size, it is unlikely that the No Project/Reasonably Foreseeable alternative would result in prevention of any development of the project site. As such, this alternative was considered to be infeasible.

Alternative Site

According to the CEQA Guidelines, two major provisions are necessary for an adequate alternative site analysis—feasibility and location. The EIR should consider alternate project locations if a significant project impact could be avoided or substantially lessened by moving the project to an alternate site.

An alternative site for the proposed project would not be feasible for a number of reasons:

- The act of moving the proposed project to an alternate site would not necessarily avoid or substantially lessen many of the significant environmental impacts
- Many of the same significant environmental impacts associated with the proposed project site would occur at an alternate site (e.g., increased traffic, air quality, and noise impacts)
- Applicant does not own any other land in the area

Therefore, a discussion of an alternative site would not be feasible nor would it meet the "rule of reason" under CEQA. This alternative was eliminated from further consideration in this EIR.

Alternative Use

Under this alternative, the project site would be developed with a non-residential use. However, given that the project site is designated and zoned for residential development, it is unlikely that any other use, such as commercial or industrial, would occur on site. An open space alternative has been discussed below. In addition, development of the project site with any uses other than residential and/or open space would be incompatible with surrounding land uses, thereby leading to potentially significant impacts not experienced with proposed project development. The specifics of the locations of uses under this alternative are speculative at this time. Overall, development of the site under this alternative would not be advantageous from an environmental perspective. Furthermore, the project site lands are privately owned and the type of development proposed at the site is largely dependent on the discretion of the landowner. Therefore, any alternative use of the site would require landowner

and developer initiation, thus making this alternative infeasible to properly analyze. This alternative was eliminated from further consideration in this EIR.

Open Space Alternative

Under this alternative, the City of La Cañada Flintridge would be required to purchase the property. This would require an involved process of establishing priority for sites to be acquired as open space Citywide, as well as determining the availability of funds to purchase such property. The City of La Cañada Flintridge currently has no funds with which to purchase properties identified as sensitive lands to preserve as open space, nor is the subject property listed as a sensitive land to date. If the property were to be identified as a sensitive site, then listed as top priority for acquisition, and if funds were to become available for purchase of the property, a Council Agenda Report would be required to obtain authorization to acquire the site. Upon Council approval, the property would be appraised for fair market value.

Preserving the site as open space would be economically infeasible, as there are no City funds available for purchase of the property. Therefore, this alternative was eliminated from further consideration in this EIR.

4.8 ENVIRONMENTALLY SUPERIOR ALTERNATIVE

The No Project/No Development alternative would be environmentally superior to the proposed project on the basis of the minimization or avoidance of physical environmental impacts. However, the CEQA Guidelines require that, if the environmentally superior alternative is the No Project/No Development alternative, "the EIR shall also identify an environmentally superior alternative among the other alternatives." In terms of physical effects on the environment, the environmentally superior alternative (other than the No Project/No Development alternative) is the Reduced Project alternative (A or B), which proposes the development of nine residential dwelling units. Of the two options, Option B would have the fewest overall impacts. It would avoid the drainage channel and riparian vegetation completely, and would not alter the hydrological characteristics of the channel. It would also reduce the visual impacts associated with a structure spanning the channel. With fewer traffic impacts and related air quality emissions, the ability to preserve more of the existing hillsides, fewer hydrology, geology, and aesthetic impacts, and significantly reduced density on-site, this alternative reduces environmental impacts the most as compared to the proposed project. Therefore, the Reduced Project Option B is the environmentally superior alternative.

4.9 COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES

As discussed in this section, each alternative has a different combination of effects that are similar to, greater than, or less than the proposed project, as summarized by Table 4-1.

Table 4-1 Comparison of Alternatives

Environmental Issue Area	*No Project*	*Alternative Configuration*	*Reduced Project Option A*	*Reduced Project Option B*
Aesthetics	-1	-1	-1	-1
Air Quality	-1	0	-1	-1
Biological Resources	-1	+1	-1	-1
Cultural Resources	-1	0	-1	-1
Geology	-1	-1	-1	-1
Hazards	-1	0	-1	-1
Hydrology	-1	0	-1	-1
Land Use and Planning	-1	+1	-1	-1
Noise	-1	0	-1	-1
Public Services	-1	-1	-1	-1
Recreation	-1	0	-1	-1
Traffic and Circulation	-1	0	-1	-1
Population and Housing	0	0	-1	-1
Utilities and Service Systems	-1	-1	-1	-1
Total	***-13***	***-1***	***-14***	***-14***

–1 Impacts less than the proposed project

0 Impacts the same as the proposed project

+1 Impacts greater than the proposed project